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Remarks

Claims 57-77 were pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 57-77 were rejected under 35 U.S.C 102(b) as being anticipated by Hou.

In response, applicants have amended claims 57, 62, 68, 69, and 73, and respectfully traverse the rejection. Claims 61, 67, 71, and 77 have been cancelled.

The invention is directed to a technique for receiving from a calling party a request for information assistance, obtaining for the calling party a destination telephone number in response to the request, and connecting the calling party to the destination number if he or she is authorized to make the call. Accordingly, the connection desired by the calling party is analyzed to determine which type of service it involves (e.g., long-distance or local) (Specification, page 20, lines 22-32). A determination is also made as to whether the calling party is authorized to receive such a service (Specification, page 20, line 33 to page 21, line 5). If the calling party is authorized to make such a call, the connection is made. (Specification, page 21, lines 4-25).

Hou discloses a technique and system for receiving a call from a caller (Hou, col. 2, lines 22-40), and allowing the caller to identify a desired destination number by uttering a label associated with the destination number (Hou, col. 1, lines 32-48). Hou also discloses a technique for verifying the caller's identity (Hou, column 7, lines 61 to col. 8, line 10), and a

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technique for establishing a billing record, and storing call-related data in the billing record (Hou, col. 9, lines 22-34).

Amended Claim 57

However, nowhere does Hou teach or suggest determining whether a connection “entails a service of a selected type,” as required by amended claim 57. Hou, at best, discloses generating a billing record associated with a subscriber’s account code, and storing in the billing record data such as the subscriber’s service number and billing telephone number, the destination telephone number, and the current data and time (Hou, col. 9, lines 26-34). However, Hou does not teach or suggest in any way determining whether a connection “entails a service of a selected type,” as set forth in amended claim 57.

A fortiori, Hou fails to teach or suggest determining whether the caller is authorized to have a connection which entails a service of a selected type based on a status of an account associated with the caller, as also required by amended claim 57. Applicants acknowledge that Hou discloses a technique for verifying a caller’s authorization by requiring the caller to enter his account code, and checking the validity of the account code (Hou, col. 11, lines 14-34). However, again, Hou fails to teach or suggest determining whether a caller is authorized to have a connection made based on the selected type of service the connection entails. As such amended claim 57, together with its dependent claims (58-60), is patentable over the cited art.

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Amended Claim 62

The amendments to claim 62 are similar to the amendments to claim 57. For the reasons set forth above, amended claim 62, together with its dependent claims (63-66), is also patentable over the cited art.

Amended Claim 68

The amendments to claim 68 are similar to the amendments to claim 57. For the reasons set forth above, amended claim 68, together with its dependent claims (69-70 and 72), is also patentable over the cited art.

Amended Claim 69

Claim 69 has been amended to correct a grammatical error.

Amended Claim 73


Amended claim 73 and amended claim 57 share similar claim limitations. For the reasons set forth above, amended claim 73, together with its dependent claims (74-76), is also patentable over the cited art.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, each of claims 57-60, 62-66, 68-70, and 72-76, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of these claims is requested and allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully,

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